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ABSTRACT

The nature and functions of the eight-year-old Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) are summarized, some of its unique features are highlighted, and a few of the challenging ambiguities confronting it are noted. The CSSE is a confederation of eight semi-autonomous member associations: the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, the Canadian Association of Deans of Education, the Canadian Association for Educational Psychology, the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education, the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration, the Canadian Association for Teacher Education, the Canadian Educational Researchers' Association, and the Comparative and International Society of Canada. CSSE seeks to provide a unified "voice" for Canadian scholarship in education and sponsors a number of publications and meetings each year. In addition, most of its member associations sponsor periodic newsletters; some sponsor special-purpose national seminars, regional conferences, and awards for superior research articles. CSSE is about one-tenth the size of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), its total membership having varied between 1200 and 1600 over the past few years. CSSE, when compared to AERA, has several unique features which are described in some detail. (RL)

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THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION

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THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION

As President of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE), I am pleased that we were invited by AERA to present this symposium on "Current Developments in Educational Research in Canada." We have reciprocated, and we look forward to the AERA symposium on "Current Developments in Educational Research in the United States" during our annual conference which will be held this June at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Our respective organizations share a commitment to the advancement of educational scholarship, and we can gain much through communication and cooperation with each other.

My purpose in this statement is to outline briefly the nature and functions of CSSE. I shall do so by summarizing the operations of our Society, highlighting some of its unique features, and noting a few of the challenging ambiguities that confront us.

Society Operations

The CSSE as such is barely eight years old, having been formed in 1972; but its antecedents go back over two or three decades. The Society is actually a confederation of eight member associations: the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, the Canadian Association of Deans of Education, the Canadian Association for Educational Psychology, the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education, the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration, the Canadian Association for Teacher Education, the Canadian Educational Researchers' Association, and the Comparative and International Society of Canada. Five of these associations (one by a different name) were established well before the formation of CSSE in 1972. At that time, they agreed to amalgamate under the "umbrella" of CSSE, which "was to be an organization which would represent nationally the interests of educational scholars and perform existing and new functions of mutual interest

while allowing the member associations to retain their identity and to plan activities related to their members' special interests." The creation of CSSE, in turn, provided a stimulus for the establishment of the three remaining associations as constituent members of the Society.*

CSSE seeks to provide a unified "voice" for Canadian scholarship in education, to advance the amount and quality of educational research, to increase support for and understanding of educational research, to improve the application of research to educational policy and practice, and to represent the interests of our members in relationship to organizations of scholars in related disciplines, other educational organizations in Canada, organizations of educational researchers in other countries, and various governmental and nonpublic agencies with an interest in educational scholarship.

Toward these ends, we sponsor a number of publications and meetings each year. We publish a substantial monthly newsletter (the CSSE News), a quarterly learned journal (the Canadian Journal of Education), a Yearbook addressed to a different theme each year, a Directory (including a computerized categorization of members by research interests), and we are now experimenting with what may become a series of monographs published jointly with selected university presses. Our most visible meeting is the four-day annual conference held in association with the meetings of Learned Societies on different campuses across Canada; we are also experimenting with the sponsorship of educational study tours to other countries. In addition, most of our member associations sponsor periodic newsletters; some sponsor special-purpose national seminars, regional conferences, and awards for

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**Edward Holdaway and David Friesen, Canadian Society for the Study of Education: Development and Challenges (Edmonton: Department of Educational Administration, the University of Alberta, 1980), p. 4.*

superior research articles and dissertations; and one publishes its own scholarly journal (Comparative and International Education). CSSE holds organizational membership in the Social Science Federation of Canada, the Canadian Education Association, and the Canadian Commission for Unesco as well as its Sub-Commissions on Education and on the Status of Women.

Total membership in CSSE has varied between 1200 and 1600 over the past few years; we are about one-tenth the size of AERA (which reflects the difference in the populations of our respective countries). Our annual conference is typically attended by about 400 members, a number small enough to facilitate mutual understanding and considerable interchange about matters affecting Canadian scholarship in education generally. About two-thirds of our members are university-based scholars, almost a quarter work in school districts, and the remainder hold positions in federal and provincial governments and in teachers' and other professional organizations. The annual membership fee in CSSE was recently doubled to $40.00 (Canadian), which is about the same as for AERA; in addition, each member must join at least one of our member associations at an additional annual fee of $5.00 per association (except for the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada, which charges $12.00 per year in order to subsidize the publication costs of its journal). While CSSE collects the fees for its member associations, it does not retain them but passes them on directly to the associations.

Our other major sources of revenue come from non-member subscriptions to our newsletter, journal, and yearbooks, and from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada which makes annual contributions of about $22,000.00 for publication of our Journal, $15,000.00 for the administration of our Society, and $22,000.00 to subsidize the travel of our members to the annual conference (for which we are eligible by virtue of our membership in the Social Science Federation of Canada, to which we

pay an annual fee of about $5,000.00).

We are managed by an Executive consisting of a President and Past-President, two Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer (all of whom are elected for two-year terms), along with the Presidents of each of our eight member associations. We have no permanent secretariat or Executive Director; rather, the secretariat is located at the President's university, which helps to subsidize our administrative costs -- including providing some released time for the Secretary-Treasurer. Similar contributions are made by the universities that host our annual conferences and by those that house the editors of our newsletter, journal, and yearbooks. Thus, we are very much a voluntary organization.

Unique Features

By comparison with the American Educational Research Association, we are unique in several ways. One of these unique features is our confederated structure: we are not a unified association split into specialized divisions, each headed by a Vice-President as is the case in AERA. Rather, we are a confederation of semi-autonomous associations, each with its own President, which have chosen to band together for some (but not all) purposes under the "umbrella" of CSSE. This reflects our history, in which several of our member associations pre-date the establishment of CSSE. The legacy is a conceptually "messy" organization in that the respective jurisdictions of our member associations do not neatly separate the field of educational scholarship into rationally specialized disciplines; thus, some of our member associations represent sub-fields of educational scholarship (e.g., foundations, comparative and international education, curriculum studies, educational psychology, educational administration), others represent particular functions of educational scholars (e.g., educational researchers and teacher educators), and one (the Deans' association) is defined by a

role position. Moreover, some of our member associations are affiliated with external bodies independently of CSSE; the Association for Curriculum Studies, for example, is related to various practitioners' groups and to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in the U.S., the Association for the Study of Educational Administration is an affiliate of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, and the Comparative and International Education Society liaises with its counterparts in other countries. And some of our member associations are subject to internal proliferation; for example, the Association for Teacher Education has a formal sub-group of business teacher educators, the Association for Curriculum Studies includes sub-associations of early childhood educators and science educators, and the Association of Foundations of Education recognizes sub-groups in the history and philosophy of education. It can be argued that this lack of organizational unity, this loosely coordinated structure, characterizes the nature of our country.

A second unique feature of CSSE is its relationship to the Social Science Federation of Canada. This is an organization of academic social science associations representing more than 12,000 Canadian anthropologists, economists, educators, geographers, historians, law teachers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, etc. It exists to represent the social sciences in Canada and abroad, to contribute to the development of effective policies for social science research in Canada, to facilitate and initiate research in the social sciences -- especially interdisciplinary research, to communicate the results of social science research and to stimulate their application in policy and practice. As a member organization, CSSE benefits from these activities and several leaders in our Society contribute to the work of the Federation's committees and participate in its projects. One such project, in which the Social Science Federation is involved with the Canadian Federation for the Humanities, is the annual

meeting of the Learned Societies -- a three-week period during which the majority of scholarly associations in Canada hold their annual conferences in conjunction with one another -- all at the same host university. So, our membership in the Social Science Federation of Canada provides unique opportunities for communication and cooperation between educational researchers and those in related disciplines. Moreover, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (the major source of financial support in our country for research in the social sciences, including Education) liaises with scholars largely through the Social Science Federation and the Federation for the Humanities. Thus, our membership in the Federation provides us with a powerful link to this funding agency that we would not otherwise enjoy as an unaligned research association. It is through this link that we qualify for travel grants in connection with attendance at our annual conference; and it is through this link that we can have input to the Council's development of research-funding policies and priorities -- including the choice of topics for funding through strategic or thematic research grants.

A third unique feature of CSSE is that, like most other national Learned Societies in Canada, it is supposed to be bilingual; this reflects the fact that Canada has two official languages -- English and French. Thus, while the vast majority of our members are English-speaking, we have an obligation to make our services available in French to our French-speaking members as fully as possible -- an expensive proposition, given the costs of simultaneous interpretation and translation services. Nevertheless, we do our best by publishing French-language material in our journal and newsletter, by including French-language sessions and interpretation in our annual conferences, and by communicating important information and official documents in both languages. Theoretically, we aspire to have all CSSE members capable of communicating in both official languages; realistically, we strive

to at least make some of our services available to our French-speaking members in their own language.

Challenging Ambiguities

I find it particularly challenging to consider CSSE in terms of the organizational ambiguities that characterize it. Let me quickly offer some examples:

Association with other social sciences -- By virtue of our membership in the Social Science Federation of Canada and our participation in the annual meetings of the Learned Societies, we enjoy unusual opportunities to work closely with our colleagues in related disciplines. On the other hand, this very closeness places us in direct competition with them for resources allocated to social science research. So far, we have not done well, particularly in competition with the economists, the political scientists, and the psychologists. We might have done better had we chosen to "go it alone," rather than to "enter the same ring" as the other social sciences.

Importance of voluntary contributions -- Because we do not have a permanent secretariat and Executive Director, we have come to rely heavily on the voluntary contributions of individual members and their universities. A commendable tradition of such contributions has been established. On the other hand, if we are to realize our potential as the organizational voice for educational scholarship in Canada, we recognize that sooner or later we must establish a clear "presence" which means a permanent secretariat and full-time Executive Director. The challenge is to achieve this without destroying the tradition of voluntary contribution to our work by members of the Society.

Identity of affiliated associations -- CSSE was formed to provide a strong, single "voice" for all educational scholars in Canada. Only one relevant society chose not to affiliate at that time -- the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education -- and now it is considering affiliation with CSSE, as are those exploring the possible establishment of a new organization -- the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Yet, we recognize that in many ways the strength of our Society derives from the strength of our member associations. So each of them is represented on our Executive, our journal's Editorial Board, the Program Committee for our annual conference, and several of the ad hoc committees we establish from time to time; yet these bodies are almost always chaired by an officer or appointee of the Society as a whole. Important as our parts are, the whole must be greater than their sum; but the appropriate balance between centralized unity of the Society and autonomy of its member associations is elusive. And this difficulty is exacerbated by natural urges toward proliferation of sub-groups within our member associations (illustrated, for example, by a recent conflict between the Comparative and International Education Society and the Association of Foundations of Education which desires to recognize a distinct sub-group of its members who specialize in comparative and international education). We have so far resisted the temptation to establish special interest groups independent of our member associations.

Broad eclecticism of education -- In seeking to incorporate the entire domain of Educational scholarship within a single organization, CSSE is dealing not with an academic discipline but with an extremely broad field of study. It is difficult in our programing to provide

activities and services that will interest all our members; and we must recognize the real danger that, in attempting to do so, we may become so eclectic as to provide little of interest to anyone. This is a problem we face especially with our journal.

A national voice for a provincial responsibility -- The provinces in Canada have almost total autonomy in the field of education. But the interests of educational researchers usually cross provincial boundaries; the problems they address are frequently nation-wide in scope and the recommendations they produce occasionally oppose provincial policies. CSSE was established in part to facilitate such research by scholars from coast to coast in Canada and to provide a unified voice for Canadian educational scholars in the international domain. The delicacy resides in the fact that our universities are funded (and therefore, indirectly, our salaries are paid) by the very provinces whose jealously guarded autonomy may be threatened by our work.

Bilingualism -- I have already referred to the ambiguity between the federal priority accorded to bilingualism in Canada and espoused by CSSE as a national Society, and the reality that the language of scholarly exchange in Education is predominantly English.

There are several other challenging ambiguities that confront our Society and help to define its mission (including our desire to serve the needs of practitioners, in relation to our definitive focus on the study of education), but I have said enough to indicate the flavour of what we have bitten off.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by mentioning that, besides continuing to work on the resolution of ambiguities like those I have mentioned, the most immediate priorities we are pursuing include the following three:

1. We hope within the next two years to establish a permanent secretariat with a full-time Executive Director in Ottawa; to do so will require substantial cash contributions by the Deans of Education across the country in the first few years, and their response to our request will constitute a pretty good test of CSSE's perceived viability.
2. We are initiating two state-of-the-art studies -- one by a committee of the Society as a whole which will seek to identify the major substantive achievements and gaps in Canadian educational research, and one by our Association of Deans of Education which will identify the factors that contribute to and detract from the effective conduct of educational research in our country; these studies have been requested and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which hopes to launch a major initiative in support of educational research but does not yet fully understand our field or the "handles" by which it may be grasped.
3. While our primary concern is with research on Canadian education by Canadian scholars, we recognize the importance to our work of communication and cooperation with colleagues in other countries; accordingly, we are taking initiatives to expand our working relationships internationally.

It is in light of this last priority that we are particularly pleased to be presenting this symposium today; we look forward to AERA's presentation at our conference in June, and to increased interaction in the future with our peers in the United States and in other countries as well.